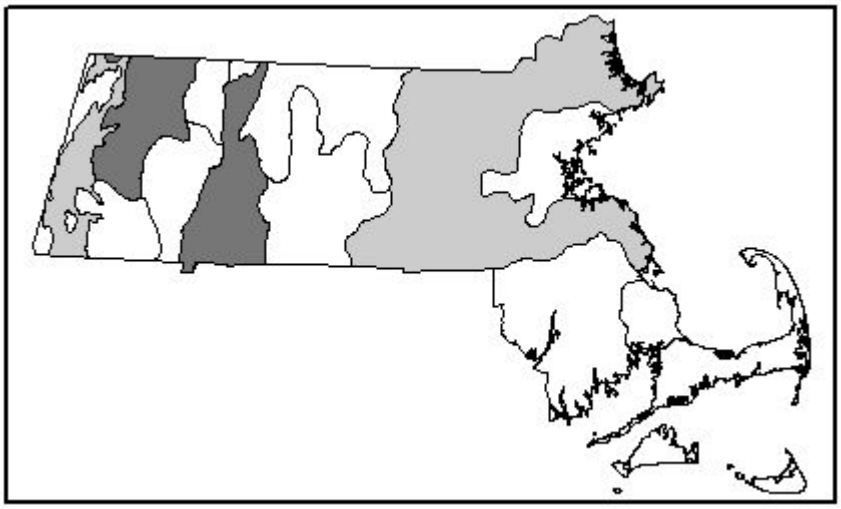
Community Name: **RIVERSIDE ROCK OUTCROP COMMUNITY**

Community Code: CT2A3A0000

SRANK: S3



Concept: Sparse, mostly herbaceous, vegetation limited to crevices where soil accumulates: only outcrops influenced by river processes are considered to be riverside outcrops.

Environmental Setting: The community occurs on flood scoured bedrock along rivers. The outcrops may be low or steep on the river's edge or extending into the river channel with alluvial soil accumulated in crevices in the rocks. Although regularly disturbed by almost annual flooding and ice scouring, river spray and proximity to water may alleviate some of the harsh conditions usually encountered on sand in open areas. Related to Riverside Seeps (page P-58), which are distinguished by being wet most of the year.

Vegetation Description: Riverside rock outcrops support vegetation typical of other outcrops, low and scattered herbaceous plants; but also have fewer woody plants due to annual ice scouring. Typical plants include a mix of usually only a few species per site: included might be harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), Canadian burnet (*Sanguisorba canadensis*), big blue stem (*Andropogon gerardii*), prostrate dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum* var. *hypericifolium*), goldenrods (*Solidago* spp.) or smooth, or riverside, rose (*Rosa blanda*). Nonnative species that commonly occur are Canada bluegrass (*Poa compressa*) and Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*).

Associations: No associations have been described in Massachusetts.

Habitat Values for Associated Fauna: These small, exposed communities have few, if any, animals that are restricted to them. Shoreline foragers such as otter (*Lontra canadensis*), mink (*Mustela vison*), and raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) would use rock outcrops as part of their overall habitat. Turtles are not attracted to rocks, preferring to bask on logs. Occasional bull frogs (*Rana catesbeiana*) or northern water snake (*Nerodia sipedon*) would be expected. Common species of dragonflies and tiger beetles hunt over the rock areas.

Associated Rare Plants:

AMELANCHIER SANGUINEA	ROUNDLEAF SHADBUSH	SC
ARABIS MISSOURIENSIS	GREEN ROCK-CRESS	T
ASTER TRADESCANTII	TRADESCANT'S ASTER	SC
CAREX LENTICULARIS	SHORE SEDGE	T
DESCHAMPSIA CESPITOSA SSP GLAUCA	TUFTED HAIRGRASS	E
SOLIDAGO PTARMICOIDES	UPLAND WHITE ASTER	T
TRISETUM TRIFLORUM SSP MOLLE	SPIKED FALSE OATS	E

Associated Rare Animals:

From: Swain, P.C. & J.B. Kearsley. 2001. Classification of the Natural Communities of Massachusetts. Version 1.3. Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. Westborough, MA.

NONE KNOWN

Examples with Public Access: None known on public lands in Massachusetts.

Threats: Trampling by river users and competition from exotic species.

Management Needs: Removal of exotics from best sites.

Synonyms

USNVC/TNC: Great Lakes Alkaline rocky Shore Sparse Vegetation [CEGL002506] and Andropogon gerardii - Canpanula rotundifolia - Solidago simplex Herbaceous Vegetation [CEGL006284].

MA (old name): SNE Riverside Outcrop Community.

ME: 2001 – Bluebell – Balsam Ragwort Shoreline Outcrop. 1991 - Similar to: Acidic Shoreline Outcrop Community and Circumneutral Shoreline Outcrop Community.

NH: Riverside Outcrop Communities.

VT: Riverside Outcrop Community.

NY: Includes: Shoreline outcrop and Calcareous shoreline outcrop.

CT:

RI:

Weatherbee: Part of: High-gradient Stream Community.

Author: P. Swain **Date:** 7/1/99